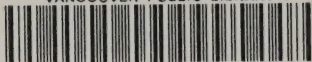


• Songs •  
OF THE PRAIRIE



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*J. Grace Fleet*

*S. Grace Fleck*



“Where only the sky is above you,  
And only the distance in view.”

# SONGS OF THE .. PRAIRIE ..

---

BY  
**ROBERT J. C. STEAD**

Author of "Prairie Born,"  
"The Empire Builders."



**TORONTO**  
**WILLIAM BRIGGS**  
1911

SONGS OF THE  
PRAIRIE

---

BY  
ROBERT J. C. STEAD

Author of "Fanny Fern,"  
"The Prairie Boy,"

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ROBERT J. C. STEAD

WILLIAM BRIDGES  
1911



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---

## THE PRAIRIE

---

### THE PRAIRIE.

THE City? Oh, yes, the City  
Is a good enough place for a while,  
It fawns on the clever and witty,  
And welcomes the rich with a smile;  
It lavishes money as water,  
It boasts of its palace and hall,  
But the City is only the daughter—  
The Prairie is mother of all!

The City is all artificial,  
Its life is a fashion-made fraud,  
Its wisdom, though learned and judicial,  
Is far from the wisdom of God;  
Its hope is the hope of ambition,  
Its lust is the lust to acquire,  
And the larger it grows, its condition  
Sinks lower in pestilent mire.

---

## THE PRAIRIE

---

The City is cramped and congested,  
The haunt and the covert of crime;  
The Prairie is broad, unmolested,  
It points to the high and sublime;  
Where only the sky is above you,  
And only the distance in view,  
With no one to jostle or shove you—  
It's there a man learns to be true!

Where the breeze whispers over the willows,  
Or sighs in the dew-laden grass,  
And the rain-clouds, like big, stormy bil-  
lows,  
Besprinkle the land as they pass;  
With the smudge-fire alight in the distance,  
The wild-duck alert on the stream,  
Where life is a psalm of existence,  
And opulence only a dream.

Where wide as the plan of creation  
The Prairies stretch ever away,  
And beckon a broad invitation  
To fly to their bosom, and stay;  
The prairie-fire smell in the gloaming—  
The water-wet wind in the spring—  
An empire untrod for the roaming—  
Ah, this is a life for a king!

---

## THE PRAIRIE

---

When peaceful and pure as a river  
They lie in the light of the moon,  
You know that the Infinite Giver  
Is stringing your spirit a-tune;  
That life is not told in the telling,  
That death does not whisper adieu,  
And deep in your bosom up-welling,  
You know that the Promise is true!

To those who have seen it and smelt it,  
To those who have loved it alone,  
To those who have known it and felt it—  
The Prairie is ever their own;  
And far though they wander, unwary,  
Far, far from the breath of the plain,  
A thought of the wind on the Prairie  
Will set their blood rushing again.

Then you to the City who want it,  
Go, grovel its gain-glutted streets,  
Be one of the ciphers that haunt it,  
Or sit in its opulent seats;  
But for me, where the Prairies are reaching  
As far as the vision can scan—  
Ah, that is the prayer and the preaching  
That goes to the heart of a man!

---

## THE PLOUGH

---

### THE PLOUGH

WHAT power is this that stands behind the  
steel?—

A homely implement of blade and wheel—  
Neglected by the margin of the way,  
And flashing back the blaze of dying day;  
Or dragging slow across the yellow field  
In silent prophecy of lavish yield,  
It marks the pace of innocence and toil,  
And taps the boundless treasure of the soil.

Before you came the red-man rode the  
plain,  
Untitled lord of Nature's great domain;  
The shaggy herds, knee-deep in mellow  
grass,

The lazy summer hours were wont to pass;  
The wild-goose nested by the water-side;  
The red deer roamed upon the prairie wide;  
The black bear trod the woods in solemn  
might;  
The lynx stole through the bushes in the  
night.



---

## THE PLOUGH

---

No sound of toil was heard in all the land;  
No joyous laugh of voice or sharp command;  
No cloud of smoke from iron funnels  
    thrown  
Was through the autumn hazes gently  
    blown;  
No edge of steel tore up the virgin sod;  
No church its shining finger turned to  
    God;  
No tradesman labored over bench and  
    tool;  
No children chattered on their way to  
    school.

But all the land lay desolate and bare,  
Its wealth of plain, its forest riches rare  
Ungessed by those who saw it through  
    their tears,  
And Nature—miser of a thousand years—  
Was adding still to her immense reserve  
That shall supply the world with brawn  
    and nerve:  
But all lay silent, useless, and unused,  
And useless 'twas because it was unused.

You came. Straightway the silent plain  
Grew mellow with the glow of golden  
    grain;

---

## THE PLOUGH

---

The axes in the solitary wood  
Rang out where stately oak and maple  
stood;  
The land became alive with busy din,  
And as the many settled, more came in;  
The world looked on in wonder and dis-  
may—  
The building of a nation in a day!

By lake and river, rock and barren waste,  
A peaceful army toiled in eager haste;  
Ten thousand workers sweating in the sun  
Pressed on the task so recently begun;  
Their outworks every day were forced  
ahead—  
And every day they gave their toll of  
dead—  
Until at length the double lines of steel  
Received the steaming steed and whirling  
wheel!

Where yesterday the lazy bison lay  
A city glitters in the sun to-day;  
His paths are turned to streets of wood  
and stone,  
And thousands tread the way he trod  
alone;

---

## THE PLOUGH

---

The mighty hum of industry and trade  
Fills all the place where once he held  
    parade,  
And far away the unheard river's play  
Makes joyous night still brighter than the  
    day!

Upon the plains a thousand towns arise,  
And quickly each to be a city tries;  
The sound of trade is heard on every hand,  
And sturdy men rise to possess the land;  
Awhile they lingered, thinking it a dream,  
But now they flow in a resistless stream  
That seems to fill the prairie far and near,  
Yet in its vastness soon they disappear.

Where once the silent red-man spurned the  
    ground  
A land of peace and plenty now is found,  
A land by Nature destined to be great,  
Where every man is lord of his estate;  
Where men may dwell together in accord,  
And honest toil receive its due reward;  
Where loyal friends and happy homes are  
    made,  
And culture follows hard the feet of trade.

---

## THE PLOUGH

---

This you have made it: Is it vain to  
    hope  
The sons of such a land will climb and  
    grope  
Along the undiscovered ways of life,  
And neither seek nor be found shunning  
    strife,  
But ever, beckoned by a high ideal,  
Press onward, upward, till they make it  
    real;  
With feet sure planted on their native sod,  
And will and aspirations linked with God?

---

## THE MOTHERING

---

### THE MOTHERING.

I had lain untrod for a million years from  
the line to the Arctic sea;  
I had dreamed strange dreams of the vast  
unknown,  
Of the lispng wind and the dancing zone  
Where the Northland fairies' feet had  
flown,  
And it all seemed good to me.

At the close of a thousand eons of sleep  
came a pang that was strange to me;  
The pang of a new life in my breast,  
The swell of a vast and a vague unrest,  
And it thrilled my soul from East to West  
As it fluttered to be free.

But I steeled my heart to the biped thing;  
of vast presumption he:  
He would lure my lonely thoughts away,  
He would sport himself on the sacred clay  
Where the dust of the prehistoric lay;  
But he scorned the soul of me.

---

## THE MOTHERING

---

So I stretched my plains for a thousand  
leagues from the mountains to the  
sea;

But he rolled them back with a steel-laid  
line,

And he crumbled space by man's design,  
And he filled his life with the breath of  
mine;

But his love he gave not me.

Then I called him foes from the farthest  
north and the snowflake fluttered  
free;

But he took him trees I had given birth,  
And he dived him coal from my bowels of  
earth,

And he laughed at me as he sat in mirth;  
But he cursed the cold of me.

Then I cut him off from his fellow-men  
that his thought might turn to me;

But he strung him a line of copper thread,  
And his fire-shod words swung overhead,  
By the fiend of air his thought was spread  
O'er hill, and plain, and lea.

Then I gave him hopes he could not define  
and fears that he could not flee;

And he heard my cry in the long, still  
night,

---

## THE MOTHERING

---

In my spirit-thrall I held him tight,  
And his blind soul-eyes craved for the  
light;

But the light he could not see.

So I held my peace till I saw him sit with  
children at his knee;

And I sent them the sun, the wind and the  
rain,

And the ferny slope and the flowery plain,  
And the wet night-smell of the growing  
grain;

And their love they gave to me.

In the last race-birth of the sons of men a  
travail holdeth me:

But out of the night of pain and tears

A new life comes with the rolling years;

And I fondle the child of my hope and  
fears,

And it seemeth good to me.

---

## HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS

---

### HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS.

YES, I'm holdin' down the homestead here  
an' roughin' it a bit,  
It seems the only kind o' life that I was  
built to fit,  
For it's thirty years last summer since I  
staked my first preserve,  
An' I reckon on the whole I've prospered  
more than I deserve;  
An' my friends kep' naggin' at me for to  
quit this toil an' strife  
An' to settle in the city for the balance of  
my life,  
An' I ain't compelled to labor—I've cached  
a wad of beans—  
But I'm happier when I'm hustlin' on the  
homestead in my jeans.



---

## HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS

---

I've tried to loaf an' like it, an' I've tried  
to swell about  
Where the boozey run to red-eye an' the  
greedy run to gout,  
An' I've tried to wear a collar an' a fancy  
fly-net vest,  
An' I've tried to think it pleasant just to  
sit around an' rest;  
An' I've mingled with the nabobs an' hee-  
hawed with other guys  
That were just as sick as I was of a life  
of livin' lies;  
I've mingled in society an' peeked behind  
the scenes—  
An' I'm happier when I'm hustlin' on the  
homestead in my jeans.

Then I got the lust for roamin' an' I rum-  
maged round the earth,  
An' I got a big experience an' corre-  
spondin' girth,  
But the more I roved an' rambled the less  
I cared to live,  
An' I only kep' on goin' cause I'd no  
alternative;  
I learned through tips an' tickets an' the  
jostle of the cars  
That I wouldn't trade a homestead for a  
continent in Mars;

---

## HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS

---

An' I bid good-bye to Fashion an' her  
social kings an' queens,  
An' I filed my second homestead an' I  
bought a pair of jeans.

'Course it's sometimes kind o' lonely on  
the prairie here alone,  
When the night-time settles round you an'  
your thoughts are all your own,  
An' old faces flit before you like a flock  
o' homin' birds,  
An' your heart swells with emotion that no  
man can put in words,  
An' you ponder on the Why-for, the Be-  
ginnin', an' the End;  
An' you know the only things worth while  
are Family an' Friend—  
From the trifles of existence your better  
judgment weans,  
An' you get the right perspective on the  
homestead—in your jeans.

There are days the sweat-drops glisten on  
this sun-burned hand of mine,  
There are nights the joints go creakin' as  
I crawl to bed, at nine,

---

## HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS

---

But I hear the horses' stampin' and the  
    rap of Collie's tail,  
An' it minds me of the Eighties an' the Old  
    Commission Trail—  
Of the days we pledged our future to a  
    land we hardly knew,  
An' the men whose brave beginnings made  
    prosperity for you;  
There are men now worth their millions I  
    remember in their teens,  
An' they made their start by hustlin' on the  
    homestead in their jeans.

There are times when most folks figure  
    that their life has been a blank;  
You may be a homeless hobo or director of  
    a bank,  
But the thought will catch you nappin'—  
    catch you sometime unawares—  
That your life has been a failure, and that  
    no one really cares;  
That the world will roll without you till  
    the Resurrection morn,  
An' that no one would have missed you if  
    you never had been born;  
An' I give you my conclusion—all that  
    livin' really means  
Is revealed to those who hustle on the  
    homestead in their jeans.

---

## HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS

---

Some day I reckon I'll cash in an' file an-  
other claim  
Where the wicked cease from troublin' an'  
the good get in the game;  
Where the pews are not allotted by the  
fashion of your dress,  
An' the only thing that figures is inherent  
manliness—  
Give me no silk-spangled horses an' no  
silver-plated hearse,  
But let some student preacher read a bit  
of Scripture verse,  
An' find a sunny hillside where the water-  
willow screens,  
An' plant me on the homestead where I  
hustled—in my jeans.

---

## THE HOMESTEADER

---

### THE HOMESTEADER.

FAR away from the din of the city,  
I dwell on the prairie alone,  
With no one to praise or to pity,  
And all the broad earth for my own;  
The fields to allure me to labor,  
The shanty to shelter my sleep,  
A league and a half to a neighbor—  
And Collie to watch if I weep.

Yes, this is my place of probation,  
Though woefully windy and bare;  
I am lord of my own habitation,  
I mock at the meaning of care;  
For here, on the edge of creation,  
Lies, far as the vision can fling,  
A kingdom that's fit for a nation—  
A kingdom—and I am the king!

The grasses aglare in the morning  
With crystalline radiance shine;  
The dew-drops are jewels adorning,  
Are jewels—and the jewels are mine;  
The heat of the sun when it shineth,  
The wet of the wind when it rains,  
Are balm to the heart that repineth—  
The Medicine-Men of the plains!

---

---

## THE HOMESTEADER

---

I follow the plough in the breaking,  
I tap the rich treasures of Time—  
The treasure is here for the taking,  
And taking it isn't a crime;  
I ride on the rack or the reaper  
To harvest the fruit of my hand,  
And daily I know that the deeper  
I'm rooting my soul in the land.

They say there is wealth in the doing,  
That royal and rich are the gains,  
But 'tisn't the wealth I am wooing  
So much as the life of the plains;  
For here in the latter-day morning,  
Where Time to Eternity clings,  
Midwife to a breed in the borning,  
I behold the Beginnings of Things!

When, reckless of time and of trouble,  
I watch till the water-fowl comes,  
Or, picking my steps in the stubble,  
I steal where the prairie-hen drums;  
When shooting the wolf in the brushes,  
Or spearing the pike in the stream,  
Or potting the crane in the rushes—  
Ambition seems only a dream.

When darkness envelops creation,  
And shadows lie deep on the plain,

---

## THE HOMESTEADER

---

I sit in my rude habitation  
And ponder my childhood again;  
Then voices come out of the distance,  
Far voices from over the sea,  
They call from the depths of existence—  
I know they are calling to me!

The voices of song and of motion,  
The voices of laughter and light,  
They're calling from over the ocean—  
Oh, God! could I answer to-night!  
The voices of friend and of lover,  
The voices I knew in the past—  
I turn to my pallet to smother  
The thoughts that have found me at last!

. . . . .

*Greater than the measure of the heroes of  
renown,  
He is building for the future, and no hand  
can hold him down;  
Though they count him but a common  
man, he holds the Outer Gate,  
And posterity will own him as the father  
of the State.*

---

## GOD'S SIGNALMAN

---

### GOD'S SIGNALMAN.

WELL, no, I'm not superstitious,—at least,  
I don't call it that,—  
But when someone spins a creepy yarn I  
don't deny it flat,  
For a man who spends a lifetime with the  
throttle in his hand  
Is bound to have adventures that he cannot  
understand;  
I sometimes think our knowledge here is  
but a sorry show,—  
We're only on the borderland of what  
there is to know.

I used to think a man could know all  
things that could be known;  
That he should not acknowledge any power  
above his own;  
That, however strange the circumstance,  
there always is a cause



---

## GOD'S SIGNALMAN

---

That is in complete obedience to some of  
Nature's laws;  
But I couldn't shake conviction off, no  
matter how I tried,  
And I've changed my way of thinking since  
the night that Willie died.

Yes, Willie was my little son—my greatest  
earthly joy—  
And wife and I just kind o' seemed to dote  
upon the boy;  
When I was out on duty she would hover  
round the lad,  
And treasure up his sayings to repeat them  
to his dad;  
And every night, at lighting time, I knew  
that, without fail,  
His baby lips were praying for the man  
out on the rail. . . .

Ah, well, for three short years we knew  
what such a treasure is,  
And we grew ever more attached to those  
sweet ways of his;  
When one day, swinging through the gate,  
I saw, with blanching face,

---

## GOD'S SIGNALMAN

---

My wife as pale as ashes, and a doctor in  
the place. . . .  
I tried to go in steady, but my knees were  
knocking hard,  
And the light went out of heaven as I  
staggered up the yard.

The doctor was a friend of mine, with  
children of his own,  
But he didn't need to tell me, for a blind  
man would have known  
By the labored, quick-caught breathing,  
and the little burning brow,  
That the Visitor was ready and was wait-  
ing for him now.  
We sat about his bedside in silent, deep  
despair,  
And the years rolled down upon us as we  
faced each other there.

'Twas a little before midnight when a ring  
came at the bell,  
And the call-boy said, "Excuse me, sir, but  
I was sent to tell  
That Ninety-six is waiting, and there's no  
one else about;

---

## GOD'S SIGNALMAN

---

They're expecting you to take her. If you  
don't she can't go out."  
I left the answer to my wife. With lips as  
white as snow,  
She whispered, "Do your duty," and I said,  
"All right, I'll go."

My fireman knew my trouble, and in  
rough-and-ready way  
He let me know his heart was feeling  
things he couldn't say;  
The night was dark and moonless, but the  
bright stars overhead  
Seemed to whisper to each other, "His  
little boy is dead."  
The very locomotive seemed to read my  
thoughts aright,  
And the monster sobbed in sympathy as we  
bulleted the night.

We'd been running fast and steady till a  
little after two;  
All the passengers were fast asleep, except,  
perhaps, a few  
Who sat a-swapping stories in the smoker,  
when a sight

---

## GOD'S SIGNALMAN

---

Met my eyes that fairly froze my blood in  
terror and affright—  
For there, before me, standing in the halo  
of the light  
Was a little child outlined against the  
blackness of the night!

Oh, I could not be mistaken, I would know  
him anywhere,  
With his father's mouth and forehead, and  
his mother's eyes and hair,  
And little arms outstretched to me that  
seemed to coax and say,  
“Come, Daddy, come and kiss me, for I'm  
going far away.”  
I flung the brake and throttle, and amid  
the hissing steam  
The vision grew, and waned away, and  
vanished as a dream!

My fireman was beside me: “Your nerve  
is going, Jack;  
Let's leave the engine here and take a walk  
along the track.  
The exercise will do you good.” I fol-  
lowed as he led,

---

## GOD'S SIGNALMAN

---

Until we reached the gorge about a hundred yards ahead:

The night wind cooled my temples as we walked the bridge upon,

Till we sudden stopped with a sudden gasp—

—THE CENTRE SPAN WAS GONE!

. . . . .

You may call it hallucination, as some of the others do,

But I know that the Master took my boy that night at half-past two;

And the prayers of a hundred passengers had been offered up in vain

Had his spirit, clad in his baby dress, not stood before my train. . . .

I know I cried in my window-seat, and was otherwise ill-behaved,

But the life that I lost was more to me than all the lives he saved.

---

## GOING HOME

---

### GOING HOME.

THE village lights grew dim behind, the  
snow lay vast and white,  
And silent as an icy shroud spread out  
upon the night;  
A wan moon struggled with the clouds, and  
through the misty haze  
The trails that branched to left and right  
were tangled as a maze;  
The settler's horses plodded in the soft,  
uncertain snow;  
And, stealing cautiously behind, a Thing  
moved to and fro.

The trail was little travelled, and the pale,  
sad, sickly light  
Was hindrance, rather than a help, to read  
the road aright;  
A dozen miles lay stretched between the  
settler and his shack:  
He thought of many things that night—not  
once of turning back.  
Above the crunching of the snow he heard  
the rising wind,  
But never looked—and never saw—the  
Thing that stole behind.

---

## GOING HOME

---

The trail was lost; the horses took their  
way across the plain;

The settler strove to hold the course, but  
strove, alas, in vain;

The fickle wind seemed scarce to stay a  
moment at a place—

Now howling in a rear attack, now snap-  
ping at his face;

And nearing, leering, peering, in the  
ghastly, ghostly light,

The Thing came softly after as it followed  
in the night.

A light! a light! a welcome light gleamed  
friendly from afar:

Oh, can it be—it cannot be—'tis surely not  
a star?

Nay, nay, it is more warm and near, a  
happy farmer's home

That beckons to the wanderer, "You need  
no longer roam."

With eager hope they hastened on, and  
plied across the plain;

As often as the horses fell they rose to  
plunge again.

The hours moved on, the miles moved on,  
they followed as a dream

The waning light, the dying light, of that  
deceitful gleam,

---

## GOING HOME

---

And when at last it seemed the place must  
almost be in sight,  
The light went out! Oh, perfidy! Oh,  
murderous, mocking light!  
'Twas well the ears grew deaf before the  
howling of the wind,  
Nor heard the ghoulisn chuckle of the  
gloating Thing behind.

The snow lay deep; the horses floundered  
with the heavy sleigh,  
Till, plunging in a sudden drift, they tore  
the tongue away;  
The sleepy driver knew it not, as through  
his nerveless hands  
His hold on life was slipping with the  
frozen leather bands.  
The night was calm and beautiful, the  
frost had ceased to smart. . . .  
*The Thing had leapt upon him and was  
tearing at his heart!*

. . . . .

The room was warm and cosy, and the  
light was soft and low,  
Her presence seemed to radiate a tender,  
girlish glow,  
And when she placed her hand in his, the  
soft, caressing palm



---

## GOING HOME

---

Was cure for every trouble, and for every  
    pain a balm:  
And she whispered, "Sweet, my sweet-  
    heart, I'll be faithful, I'll be true;  
In the springtime, in the springtime, I will  
    cross the sea to you." . . .

A little bed was fashioned in the fitful fire-  
    light glow;  
A little boy was murmuring a prayer of long  
    ago;  
And mother-hands upon his head, that  
    fondled in his hair,  
And sense of quiet comfort and respite  
    from every care;  
And a pillow white and downy, and a bed  
    so soft and deep,  
And tired lips were lisping, "Now I lay  
    me down to sleep." . . .

Again the scene was changed: A flood of  
    mellow, amber light,  
That filled the soul with ecstasy of infinite  
    delight;  
While crystal-cadenced music tinkled  
    through the yellow glow,  
The lullabies of childhood and the songs of  
    long ago;

---

## GOING HOME

---

The sea of God on every hand in silent  
    silver lay:  
An atom fell: its circles spread through  
    all eternity.

. . . . .

The Thing was gone; its work was done; a  
    lump of lifeless clay  
Sat crouching, crouching, crouching in the  
    dawning of the day;  
The frozen eyeballs stared upon a wilder-  
    ness of snow,  
And peered into the future, to the Place  
    no man may know.  
A she-wolf prowled about the spot, and  
    sniffed below the sleigh,  
And howled a melancholy howl, and slunk  
    in fear away.

---

## JUST BE GLAD

---

### JUST BE GLAD.

FEELIN' kind of all run down?

Mighty bad:

Sick and tired o' life in town?

Don't be sad:

What you're needing isn't rest:

Square your shoulders, raise your chest;

Pack your turkey; go out West—

Just be glad!

Gone astray in No-Man's-Land?

Silly lad!

Ought to have your carcass tanned

With a gad:

Should ha' kept the narrow track:

Never mind, you can't go back;

Things may not be quite so black—

Just be glad!

---

## JUST BE GLAD

---

Gone and blown in all your cash  
    On a fad?  
Livin' now on soup and hash?  
    Writin' Dad?  
Don't you do it. Here's a tip;  
Keep a good stiff upper lip;  
Needn't fall because you slip—  
    Just be glad!

Friends refuse to help you out?  
    Don't get mad!  
You would be a lazy lout  
    If they had.  
Do not envy place or pelf;  
Praise the Lord, you've got your health;  
Dig in! Be a man yourself—  
    Just be glad!

All the world may say or do,  
    Good or bad,  
Isn't anything to you—  
    Just be glad!  
Though you work at book or trade,  
Though you work with pen or spade,  
Hump yourself—you'll make the grade—  
    Just be glad!

---

## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

### A PRAIRIE HEROINE.

THEY were running out the try-lines, they  
were staking out the grade;  
Through the hills they had to measure,  
through the sloughs they had to  
wade;  
They were piercing unknown regions, they  
were crossing nameless streams,  
With the prairie for a pillow and the sky  
above their dreams,  
They were mapping unborn cities in the  
age-long pregnant clay:  
When they came upon a little mound across  
the right-of-way.  
  
There were violets growing on it, and a  
buttercup or two,  
That whispered of affection ever old and  
ever new,  
And a little ring of whitewashed stones,  
bright in the summer sun,  
But of marble slab or granite pile or pillar  
there was none;  
And across the sleeping prairie lay a little,  
low-built shack,  
With a garden patch before it and a wheat-  
field at its back.

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## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

“ Well, boys, we’d better see him, and he  
    hadn’t ought to kick,  
For we’ll give him time to move it if he  
    does it pretty quick.”  
But scarcely had the foreman spoke when  
    straight across the farm  
They saw the settler coming with a rifle  
    on his arm;  
Some would ha’ hiked for cover but they  
    had no place to run,  
But most of them decided they would stay  
    and see the fun.

The farmer was the first to speak: “ I hate  
    to interfere,  
And mighty glad I am to see the railway  
    comin’ near,  
But before you drive your pickets across  
    this piece of land  
You ought to hear the story, or you will  
    not understand:  
It’s the story of a girl who was as true as  
    she was brave,  
And all that now remains of her is in that  
    little grave.

“ I didn’t want to bring her when I hit the  
    trail out West,  
I knew I shouldn’t do it, and I did my  
    level best

---

## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

To coax her not to come out for a year or  
two at least,  
But to stay and take it easy with her  
friends down in the East;  
But while I coaxed and argued I was  
feelin' mighty glum,  
And right down in my heart I kep' a-hopin'  
she would come.

"Well, by rail and boat and saddle we got  
out here at last,  
A-livin' in the future, and forgettin' of  
the past;  
We built ourselves a little home, and in  
our work and care  
It seemed to me she always took what was  
the lion's share;  
God knows just what she suffered, but she  
hid it with a smile,  
And made out that she thought I was the  
only thing worth while.

"She stood it through the summer and the  
warm, brown days of fall,  
And of all the voices calling her she would  
not hear the call;  
But when the winter settled with its cold,  
white pall of snow

---

## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

She seemed to whiten with it, but she  
thought I didn't know;  
She tried to keep her spirits up and laugh  
my fears away,  
But I saw her growing thin and ever  
weaker day by day.

"At last I couldn't stand it any longer, so  
I said,  
'I think you'd better try and spend a day  
or two in bed  
While I go for a doctor. It's only sixty  
miles.'  
She gave a little wistful look, half hidden  
in her smiles,  
And said, 'Perhaps you'd better, though  
I think I'll be all right  
When the spring comes.' . . . Well, I  
started out that night.

"I made the trip on horseback, by the guid-  
ing Polar star,  
And a dozen times the distance never  
seemed one-half so far.  
But the doctor had gone out of town,—  
just where, no one could say,  
And a lump rose in my chest that fairly  
took my breath away.



---

## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

But I daren't stay there thinking, and my  
search for him was vain,  
So I bought some wine and brandy and I  
started home again.

“ Forgetful of my horse, I spent the whole  
night on the road,  
Till early in the morning he collapsed  
beneath his load;  
I saw the brute was done for, and although  
it made me cry,  
I hacked into his jug'lar vein and left him  
there to die;  
And then I shouldered the supplies and  
staggered on alone,  
And thinking of my wife's distress I quite  
forgot my own.

“ She must ha' watched all night for me,  
for in the morning grey  
She saw me stagger in the snow and fall  
beside the way,  
And God knows how she did it—she was  
only skin and bone—  
But she came out here and found me and  
dragged me home alone,  
And she took the precious liquor that had  
cost us all so dear,  
And poured it down this worthless hulk  
that's standin' blattin' here. . . .

---

## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

"I guess you know what happened—I lived,  
    she passed away;  
I robed her in her wedding-dress and laid  
    her in the clay;  
And every spring I plant the flowers that  
    grow upon her grave,  
For I hold the spot as sacred as the  
    Arimathæan's cave;  
And when the winter snows have come,  
    and all is white and still,  
I spread a blanket on the mound to keep  
    out frost and chill.

"Folks say I've got a screw loose, that  
    I've gone to acting queer,  
But I sometimes hear her speaking, and I  
    know she's always near;  
And sometimes in the night I feel the  
    pressure of her hand,  
And for a blessed hour I share with her  
    the Promised Land:—  
Let man or devil undertake to desecrate  
    my dead  
And as sure as God's in heaven I will  
    pump him full of lead."

They were rough-and-ready railway men  
    who stood about the spot,

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## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

They were men that lied and gambled,  
they were men that drank and  
fought,  
But some of them were sneezing, and some  
were coughing bad,  
And some were blowing noses on anything  
they had;  
And some of them were swallowing at  
lumps that shouldn't come,  
And some were swearing softly, and some  
were simply dumb.

At last the foreman found his voice: "I  
guess your claim is sound;  
I wouldn't care to run a track across that  
piece of ground. . . .  
We'll have to change our lay-out . . .  
but I hope . . . we have the  
grace  
To build a fitting monument to mark that  
holy place;  
Put me down for a hundred; now, boys,  
how much for you?"  
And they answered in a chorus, "We'll see  
the business through."

. . . . .

---

## A PRAIRIE HEROINE

---

The passengers upon a certain railway o'er  
    the plain  
See a shining shaft of marble from the  
    windows of the train,  
But they do not know the story of the  
    girl-wife in the snow  
And the broken-hearted farmer with his  
    lonely life of woe,  
And none of them have guessed that the  
    deflection in the line  
Is the railway-builders' tribute to a prairie  
    heroine.

---

## THE SEER

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### THE SEER.

IN the dingy dust of his deerskin tent sat  
the chief of a dying race,  
And the lake that lapt at his wigwam door  
threw back a frowning face,  
And a sightless squaw at the centre-pole  
crooned low in a hybrid speech,  
When a man of God swept round the  
point and landed on the beach.

The heavy eyes grew bright with fire, the  
lips shaped to a sneer—  
“Welcome, my paleface brother, what good  
news brings you here?  
Are you come with the voice of healing,  
with the book of your blameless  
breed,  
To soothe my soul with comfort while my  
body gnaws with need?”

---

## THE SEER

---

“ Welcome, O paleface brother ; come, what  
    have you to fear ?  
Mayhap the redskin chieftain can teach as  
    well as hear ;  
And while we sing your sacred songs and  
    breathe your mystic prayer,  
Who knows what inspiration may come on  
    the ev’ning air ? . . .

“ Listen ; you are a scholar, schooled in the  
    pale-face lore :  
’Tis said a dying saint may sometimes see  
    the shining shore ;  
That closing eyes peer far beyond the realm  
    of mortal sight,—  
Who knows but that a dying race may  
    read the road aright ?

“ A dying race ! We know it ; the land is  
    ours no more,  
No more we roam the prairies as in the  
    days of yore ;  
The brave, free spirit that was ours is  
    crushed and passed away,  
And bodies without spirits are predestined  
    to decay.

---

## THE SEER

---

“No matter. In the summertime the  
    flowers bloom in the grass,  
The startled insects flood the fields and  
    chirrup as you pass,  
The birds sing in the bushes; but before  
    the wintry blast  
The flowers and the insects and the little  
    birds are past.

“Yet once again the spring will come, the  
    flowers will bloom again,  
And insects chirrup blithely where the  
    former ones are lain;  
The white snows of the wintertime will  
    vanish in the heat,  
And out-door life and color will follow  
    their defeat.

“Can the paleface read the riddle? Has he  
    eyes to see the signs?  
Or thinketh he that snow will lie forever  
    on the pines?  
That housed-up life can triumph for the  
    mastery of state,  
Or cushioned chairs produce a race de-  
    stined to dominate?

---

## THE SEER

---

“Behold, the things your hands have done,  
the power your arts have won—  
Behold, those things shall vanish as the  
snow before the sun;  
The snow that smothered out the red—ah,  
hear it if you can—  
Shall leave the earth as suddenly, *and*  
*leave it brown and tan.*

“Hear ye a little lesson—surely ye know  
its worth—  
Only an out-door nation can be master of  
the earth;  
Soon as ye seek your couches, soft with the  
spoils of trade—  
See well to your outer trenches before the  
mines are laid!

“Hear ye a little lesson—can ye the truth  
divine?  
Milk ye may mix with water, and water  
will mix with wine;  
Mix as ye may on your prairies, mix in  
your hope, and toil,  
But know in all your mixing that water  
won't mix with oil!”

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## THE SEER

---

In the dingy dusk of his deerskin tent sat  
the chief of a dying race,  
And the glow of holy prophecy lit up his  
rugged face,  
And the foremost light of the setting sun  
fell far on an eastern land,—  
*And who shall save the paleface if he will  
not understand?*

---

## THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

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### THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE.

HE is brand-new out from England, and  
he thinks he knows it all—

(There's a bloomin' bit o' goggle in his  
eye)

The "colonial" that crosses him is going  
to get a fall—

(There's a seven-pound revolver on his  
thigh).

He's a son of Marquis Noddle, he's a  
nephew of an earl,

In the social swim of England he's got  
'em all aw whirl,

He's as confident as Cæsar and as pretty  
as a girl—

Oh, he's out in deadly earnest, do or die.

They will spot him in the cities by the  
cowhide on his feet—

(They were built for crushing cobble-  
stones at 'ome)

And the giddy girls will giggle when they  
see him on the street—

(There's a brand-new cowboy hat upon  
his dome).

---

## THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

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He has come from home and kindred to  
the land beyond the sea,  
To the far-famed land of plenty, to the  
country of the free,  
But he can't forget he owns it from Cape  
Race to Behring Sea—  
He is coming just as Cæsar would to  
Rome.

When his pile is getting slender he'll go  
looking for a job,  
(And he thinks he ought to get it, don't-  
cherknow)  
But he finds that he must mingle with the  
common city mob  
(How *can* they think that he would  
stoop so low?).  
So he hikes him to the country, where the  
rustics will be proud  
To salute him when they meet him, and to  
whisper, nice and loud,  
"He's the son of Marquis Noddle,—you  
would know him in a crowd"—  
They will pay him there the homage that  
they owe.

In the little country village he will manu-  
facture mirth—  
(For it's there they take the measure of  
a swell)

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## THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

---

They will soon proceed to teach him that  
he doesn't own the earth

(With a quit-claim on the sun and moon  
as well).

They will show him that the country isn't  
altogether slow,

And that they can travel any pace that he's  
a mind to go;

He will be a right good fellow till they run  
him out of dough—

Oh, it is a tale of merriment they tell!

So to keep his bones together he goes  
working on a farm,

(Where they get up at a little after two)

Where they think to take him down a peg  
will not do any harm,

(And they sleep when there is nothing  
else to do).

Where they work him like a nigger nearly  
twenty hours a day,

And they don't disguise the fact that they  
consider him a jay,

And he eats so much and sleeps so much  
he isn't worth his pay—

Oh, it doesn't matter that his blood is  
blue.

---

## THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

---

He decides to do a season as a cowboy in  
the West,  
(Where they call a man a boy until he's  
dead)  
And he tries to walk a-swagger with a  
military chest,  
(And he isn't overslept or overfed).  
They will set him breaking bronchos, though  
it's little to his mind;  
With many new-learned epithets he'll per-  
forate the wind—  
How can he know the boys have stuck a  
thistle on behind?  
He will end the exhibition on his head.  
They will fill him full of liquor that'll  
frizzle his inside,  
(In the cooler he can square it with his  
God).  
He will spend his nights in places where  
the *demi-monde* reside,  
(In the morning he'll be minus watch  
and wad).  
They'll abuse him as a youngster, they will  
mock him as a man,  
They'll make his life a thorny path in every  
way they can,  
Till he curses his existence and the day  
that it began,  
And he wishes he was rotting in the sod.

---

## THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

---

He will write long tales to England, tales  
of bitterness and woe,

(They will print 'em in the papers over  
there).

He will tell them pretty nearly everything  
he doesn't know,

(And they'll take it all for gospel over  
there).

He will tell them that the country isn't fit  
for gentlemen,

That any who escape from it do not come  
back again,

He is handy with his language and he  
wields a bitter pen—

To the truth of each assertion he would  
swear.

He's a growler, he's a growser, he's a  
nuisance, he's a bum,

(And the country hasn't any room for  
such)

And they class him in the papers as  
"European scum,"

(They would rather have the Irish or  
the Dutch).

He's the butt of every jester, he's the mark  
of every joke,

He is wearing borrowed trousers—he has  
put his own in soak—

---

## THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

---

He's a useless good-for-nothing, beaten,  
buffeted, and broke,  
And of sympathy he won't get over-  
much.

. . . . .

In a dozen years you'll find him with a  
section of his own,  
(He had to learn his lesson at the start)  
With a happy wife and children he is trying  
to atone—  
(For he loves the country now with all  
his heart).  
He's a son of dear old England, he's a  
hero, he's a brick;  
He's the kind you may annihilate but you  
can never lick,  
For he played and lost, and played and lost,  
and stayed and took the trick;  
In a world of men he'll play a manly part.

---

## THE PRODIGALS

---

### THE PRODIGALS.

KNEE-DEEP our prairies link the seas,  
Flood-full our voiceless rivers wend;  
We hold unturned the larder keys  
On which the future years depend:  
And shall we suffer alien throngs  
Usurp the land to us belongs?

What though we are to fortune born  
And all our paths are paved with gold?  
We flaunt our folly up to scorn,  
Because we keep not what we hold:  
Why should we rob our right of  
birth  
To foster all the breeds of earth?

We picture with unfeigned dismay  
Man-glutted lands of other flags,  
They multiply but to decay,  
And rot in pestilence and rags;  
Why hasten we to emulate  
These helpless tragedies of Fate?



---

## THE PRODIGALS

---

The land our children's sons will need,  
That land we have wide open thrown  
To heathen knaves of other breed  
And paunchy pirates of our own:  
We give away earth's greatest prize,  
And pat ourselves, and call us wise.

No father he who to the slums  
For husband to his child would send,  
And no one worthy of her comes  
She lives a maiden to the end:  
Yet we have placed our virgin trust  
In spawn of Continental lust.

If dumb we be to Reason's cries—  
Our children's cause she pleads in vain—  
Our outraged sons at length will rise  
And seize their heritage again;  
And fools, who prate of vested right,  
Will either cease to prate—or fight.

The land is ours, the land will keep,  
And Time is nowise near its end;  
We hold our birthright all too cheap  
Its sacredness to comprehend;  
In after years our sons will say,  
“Why frittered ye the land away?”

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## THE SQUAD OF ONE

---

### THE SQUAD OF ONE.

SERGEANT BLUE of the Mounted Police was  
a so-so kind of a guy;  
He swore a bit, and he lied a bit, and he  
boozed a bit on the sly;  
But he held the post at Snake Creek Bend  
for country and home and God,  
And he cursed the first and forgot the rest  
—which wasn't the least bit odd.

Now the life of the North-West Mounted  
Police breeds an all-round kind of  
man;  
A man who can jug a down-South thug  
when he rushes the red-eye can;  
A man who can pray with a dying bum or  
break up a range stampede—  
Such are the men of the Mounted Police  
and such are the men they breed.

---

## THE SQUAD OF ONE

---

The snow lay deep at the Snake Creek post  
and deep to east and west,  
And the Sergeant had made his ten-league  
beat and settled down to rest  
In his two-by-four that they called a  
“post,” where the flag flew over-  
head,  
And he took a look at his monthly mail,  
and this is the note he read:

“To Sergeant Blue of the Mounted Police  
at the post of Snake Creek Bend,  
From U. S. Marshal of County Blank,  
greetings to you, my friend,  
They’s a team of toughs give us the slip,  
though they shot up a couple of  
blokes,  
And we reckon they’s hid in Snake Creek  
Gulch and posin’ as farmer folks.

“They’s as full of sin as a barrel of booze  
and as quick as a cat with a gun,  
So if you happen to hit their trail be first  
to start the fun;  
And send out your strongest squad of men  
and round them up if you can,  
For dead or alive we want them here.  
Yours truly, Jack McMann.”

---

## THE SQUAD OF ONE

---

And Sergeant Blue sat back and smiled,  
    "Ho, here is a chance of game!  
Folks 'round here have been so good that  
    life is getting tame;  
I know the lie of Snake Creek Gulch  
    —where I used to set my traps—  
I'll blow out there to-morrow and I'll  
    bring them in—perhaps."

Next morning Sergeant Blue, arrayed in  
    farmer smock and jeans,  
In a jumper sleigh he had made himself  
    set out for the evergreens  
That grow on the bank of Snake Creek  
    Gulch by a homestead shack he  
    knew,  
And a smoke curled up from the chimney-  
    pipe to welcome Sergeant Blue.

"Aha, and that looks good to me," said  
    the Sergeant to the smoke,  
"For the lad that owns this homestead  
    shack is East in his wedding-yoke;  
There are strangers here, and I'll bet a  
    farm against a horn of booze  
That they are the bums that are predestined  
    to dangle in a noose."

---

## THE SQUAD OF ONE

---

So he drove his horse to the shanty door  
and hollered a loud "Good-day,"  
And a couple of men with fighting-irons  
came out beside the sleigh,  
And the Sergeant said, "I'm a stranger  
here and I've driven a weary mile;  
If you don't object I'll just sit down by  
the stove in the shack awhile."

So the Sergeant sat and smoked and talked  
of the home he had left down East,  
And the cold, and the snow, and the price  
of land, and the life of man and  
beast.  
But all of a sudden he broke it off with,  
"Neighbors, take a nip?  
There's a horn of the best you'll find out  
there in my jumper, in the grip."

So one of the two went out for it, and as  
soon as he closed the door  
The other one staggered back as he gazed  
up the nose of a forty-four,  
But the Sergeant wasted no words with  
him, "Now, fellow, you're on the  
rocks,  
And a noise as loud as a mouse from you  
and they'll take you out in a box."

---

## THE SQUAD OF ONE

---

So he fastened the bracelets to his wrists  
and his legs with some binder-thread,  
And he took his knife and he took his gun  
and he rolled him on to the bed;  
And then as number two came in he said,  
"If you want to live,  
Put up your dukes and behave yourself or  
I'll make you into a sieve."

And when he had coupled them each to  
each, and laid them out on the bed,  
"It's cold, and I guess we'd better eat be-  
fore we go," he said.  
So he fried some pork and he warmed some  
beans, and he set out the best he  
saw,  
And they ate thereof, and he paid for it,  
according to British law.

That night in the post sat Sergeant Blue  
with paper and pen in hand,  
And this is the word he wrote and signed  
and mailed to a foreign land:  
"To U. S. Marshal of County Blank,  
greetings I give to you;  
My squad has just brought in your men,  
and the squad was  
"Sergeant Blue."

---

## THE SQUAD OF ONE

---

*There are things unguessed, there are tales  
untold, in the life of the great lone  
land,  
But here is a fact that the prairie-bred  
alone may understand,  
That a thousand miles in the fastnesses  
the fear of the law obtains,  
And the pioneers of justice were the  
"Riders of the Plains."*

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## ALKALI HALL

---

### ALKALI HALL.

WHEN Lord Landseeker came out West to  
    have a look around,  
And spend a little money if the right thing  
    could be found,  
He hadn't breathed the prairie air more  
    than a day or two  
Until he was the centre of a philanthropic  
    crew  
Who sought to show His Lordship all the  
    short-cuts to success  
(Though why they should have troubled,  
    His Lordship couldn't guess,  
For each was losing money, as he candidly  
    confest,  
Which seemed to be a fashion with the  
    dealers in the West.)

Thus His Lordship grew suspicious that  
    his "friends" would turn him down,  
And he quietly bought a ticket to a little  
    country town;  
But he didn't know the message that was  
    flashed along the wire  
To a simple country dealer in the land of  
    his desire;



---

## ALKALI HALL

---

And it read: "Look out for Goggles,  
he'll be with you this a.m."  
And the crowd around the station—well, he  
merely smiled to them,  
And thought it jolly decent they'd assemble,  
don'tcherknow,  
And file along behind him as they followed,  
in a row.

The snow had fallen softly all the calm  
November night,  
And the morning found the prairies with a  
covering of white;  
But His Lordship took a citizen who  
"happened" in his way,  
And they drove into the country for the  
most part of the day,  
Until they reached a section that was flat  
and free from stone,  
And the citizen remarked about a fellow  
he had known  
Who offered thirty dollars for this section  
in the fall,  
But the owner wanted forty, or he wouldn't  
sell at all.  
Then His Lordship drove across it, and  
it seemed to catch his eye,  
And he whispered to the driver, "That's  
the section I will buy;"

---

## ALKALI HALL

---

So in town they found the owner, who was  
    very loath to sell,  
But he finally consented, if His Lordship  
    wouldn't tell  
That the price was forty dollars by the  
    acre; this agreed,  
A lawyer drew the papers and His Lord-  
    ship got the deed,  
And he sailed across the ocean with the  
    satisfying thought  
That he'd followed his own judgment in  
    the bargain he had bought.

The winter snows had vanished and the  
    spring was growing late,  
When Lord Landseeker came again to view  
    his real estate,  
And he drove out in a buggy to where his  
    section lay,  
And his heart was very happy as he  
    smoked along the way  
Till the section burst upon them, and he  
    scarce believed his sight,  
For the land lay in the sunshine, flashing  
    back a snowy white . . . . .  
And His Lordship stooped and felt it, and  
    he heaved a little sigh,  
As the knowledge dawned upon him that  
    his land was—*alkali*!

---

## ALKALI HALL

---

His Lordship did some thinking as they  
    journeyed back to town,  
And his wonted happy features were o'er-  
    shadowed with a frown;  
But he neither crawled nor blustered,  
    neither bluffed nor swore nor kicked,  
(For the men from little England never  
    know when they are licked),  
But he advertised for tenders for con-  
    struction on the land,  
And the buildings he erected were the best  
    he could command;  
With a hundred rooms for students, and  
    quarters for the staff,  
And the workmen often wondered what  
    made His Lordship laugh!

In the papers of Old England there ap-  
    peared a little ad,  
For the benefit of parents whose sons were  
    going bad;  
"Teach your boys the art of farming in  
    the great Canadian West;  
Our instruction is unrivalled, our cur-  
    riculum the best;  
There's a grate in every chamber and a  
    bath in every hall,  
And a full dress-suited dinner every ev'n-  
    ing, free to all;

---

## ALKALI HALL

---

There is tennis, polo, marksmanship, and  
half the day in bed,  
And we make them into farmers for a  
hundred pounds a head."

. . . . .

His Lordship's college prospers and is  
crowded to the doors  
With "students" playing poker while the  
"servants" do the chores;  
What they do not know of farming they  
make up in other lines,  
They are judges of tobacco and connois-  
seurs of wines;  
They are experts at the races and at  
sundry other games—  
Though they couldn't tell the breeching of  
the harness from the hames—  
Though they're far from home and kindred  
they occasion no alarm,  
*That was what their parents wanted when  
they sent them out to farm.*

---

## PRAIRIE BORN

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### PRAIRIE BORN.

WE have heard the night wind howling as  
    we lay alone in bed;  
We have heard the grey goose honking as  
    he journeyed overhead;  
We have smelt the smoke-wraith flying in  
    the hot October wind,  
And have fought the fiery demon that came  
    roaring down behind;  
We have seen the spent snow sifting  
    through the key-hole of the door,  
And the frost-line crawling, crawling, like  
    a snake, along the floor;  
We have felt the storm-fiend wrestle with  
    the rafters in his might,  
And the baffled blizzard shrieking through  
    the turmoil of the night.

We have felt the April breezes warm along  
    the plashy plains;  
We have mind-marked to the cadence of  
    the falling April rains;  
We have heard the crash of water where  
    the snow-fed rivers run,  
Seen a thousand silver lakelets lying shin-  
    ing in the sun;

---

## PRAIRIE BORN

---

We have known the resurrection of the  
    Springtime in the land,  
Heard the voice of Nature calling and the  
    words of her command,  
Felt the thrill of springtime twilight and  
    the vague, unfashioned thought  
That the season's birthday musters from  
    the hopes we had forgot.

We have heard the cattle lowing in the  
    silent summer nights;  
We have smelt the smudge-fire fragrance  
    —we have seen the smudge-fire  
    lights—  
We have heard the wild duck grumbling  
    to his mate along the bank;  
Heard the thirsty horses snorting in the  
    stream from which they drank;  
Heard the voice of Youth and Laughter  
    in the long, slow-gloaming night;  
Seen the arched electric splendor of the  
    Great North's livid light;  
Read the reason of existence—felt the  
    touch that was divine—  
And in eyes that glowed responsive saw  
    the End of God's design.

---

## PRAIRIE BORN

---

We have smelt the curing wheat-fields and  
the scent of new-mown hay;  
We have heard the binders clatter through  
the dusty autumn day;  
We have seen the golden stubble gleaming  
through the misty rain;  
We have seen the plow-streaks widen as  
they turned it down again;  
We have heard the threshers humming in  
the cool September night;  
We have seen their dark procession by  
the straw-piles' eerie light;  
We have heard the freight-trains groan-  
ing, slipping, grinding, on the rail,  
And the idle trace-chains jingle as they  
jogged along the trail.

We have felt the cold of winter—cursed  
by those who know it not—  
We have braved the blizzard's vengeance,  
dared its most deceptive plot;  
We have learned that hardy races grow  
from hardy circumstance,  
And we face a dozen dangers to attend a  
country dance;  
Though our means are nothing lavish we  
have always time for play,  
And our social life commences at the clos-  
ing of the day;

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---

## PRAIRIE BORN

---

We have time for thought and culture,  
time for friendliness and friend,  
And we catch a broader vision as our  
aspirations blend.

We have hopes to others foreign, aims  
they cannot understand,  
We, the "heirs of all the ages," we, the  
first-fruits of the land;  
Though we think with fond affection of  
the shores our fathers knew,  
And we honor all our brothers—for a  
brother's heart is true—  
Though we stand with them for progress,  
peace, and unity, and power,  
Though we die with them, if need be, in  
our nation's darkest hour—  
Still the prairies call us, call us, when all  
other voices fail,  
And the call we knew in childhood is the  
call that must prevail.



---

"A COLONIAL"

---

"A COLONIAL."

*(In some circles the term "colonial" is still allowed to imply inferiority and dependence.)*

ONLY a Colonial!

Only a man of nerve and heart  
Who has spurned the ease of the life  
"at home,"

Only a man who would play his part  
In a new breed-birth on a distant  
loam;

Only a man of sense and worth  
Who is not afraid of the ends of earth.

Only a Colonial!

Only a man who has cornered Fate  
And matched his strength with the  
Unattained;

Only the guard at the Outer Gate,  
Who holds for you what he has  
gained,

That your children, seized of a better  
sense,

May share with him Toil's recompense.

---

## " A COLONIAL "

---

Only a Colonial!

Only a man who has bridged the deep,  
And stained the map a British hue,  
Who builds an Empire while ye sleep  
And deeds the ownership to you.  
'Tis the Viking blood which gave you  
    birth  
That has driven him to the ends of  
    earth.

Only a Colonial!

Wherever the flag that ye think is great  
Is flown to the farthest winds that  
    blow,  
Wherever the colonists ye berate  
In their blind faith-vision onward go,  
Ye may find ye hearts that are British  
    still—  
In your self-conceit do ye count them  
    nil?

Only a Colonial!

Rough as the bark of his forest tree  
His ways may seem to the fat and  
    sleek,  
But ye owe your Empire to such as he,  
Though the hoar-frost glisten on his  
    cheek;

---

## " A COLONIAL "

---

He has carried your flag where ye dared  
not go,  
And little ye reck of the debt ye owe.

Only a Colonial!

No doubt he is raw on your social laws  
And grates on your sense of caste and  
creed,  
But he lives too near to Facts and Cause  
To study heraldry and breed;  
And, knowing man in his primal state,  
He scorns the claims of the social great.

Only a Colonial!

The name in cheap contempt ye fling,  
Is not the whim of birth or chance,  
We well ignore the flippant sting,  
Or charge it to your ignorance;  
The colonist, and sons of his,  
Have made the Empire what it is.

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## LITTLE TIM TROTTER

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### LITTLE TIM TROTTER.

LITTLE Tim Trotter was born in the West,  
Where the prairie lies sunny and brown;  
Never was, surely, so welcome a guest  
In the stateliest halls of the town;  
For Little Tim Trotter was thoughtful and  
brave,  
And a lover of summer and shower,  
And Little Tim Trotter took less than he  
gave  
To the hearts that were under his  
power.

Little Tim Trotter would play in the sun,  
Or lie in the buffalo grass,  
And in fancy he saw the wild buffalo run  
And the brave-riding Indians pass;  
And with eyes that were deep as the in-  
finite blue  
He would picture himself at their head,  
For no one so young as this hunter-man  
knew  
That the herds and the riders were dead.

---

## LITTLE TIM TROTTER

---

Little Tim Trotter would lie in his bed  
While the fire-light played low on the  
floor,  
And strange were the thoughts that in  
Little Tim's head  
Played low like the fire at the door;  
The hopes that were his, and the wonders  
he knew,  
And the yearning he had in his heart,  
With the glimmering light of the future in  
view,  
And Little Tim just at the start!

Little Tim Trotter has heard the long call  
And has answered with joy and sur-  
prise,  
And the thoughts and the things that are  
hid from us all  
To-day are revealed to his eyes;  
And he rides in the van of his buffalo  
herd,  
Or in camp with his Indians brave;  
But Little Tim Trotter speaks never a  
word  
Through the mound of a little green  
grave.

---

## THE OLD GUARD

---

### THE OLD GUARD.

KNEW you the men of the Old Guard?  
Men of the camp and trail;  
Guard of the van when Time began in the  
land of grass and gale,  
Of a sky-wide land they seized command  
where the mightiest prevail.

Who were the men of the Old Guard?  
Giants of strength and will,  
Trained in the school of hard-luck rule  
and daring to die or kill;  
Staking their lives, and their young, and  
wives, on the road up Fortune's hill.

Whence were the men of the Old Guard?  
Heroes of '82;  
From swamp and ledge and ocean's edge  
they came to see and do,  
And they failed at first, and the land they  
cursed, but they stayed and strug-  
gled through.

---

## THE OLD GUARD

---

Hope of the men of the Old Guard?  
Little but hope was theirs;  
With empty hand in an untried land they  
clutched at wheat and tares,  
And home at night by the wood-fire light  
was answer to their prayers.

Way of the men of the Old Guard? What  
of their end and way?  
You may find their bones by the lime-  
white stones where the sun-dried  
sleugh-holes lay,  
For the Goddess Trade is a costly jade, and  
they were the ones to pay.

Joy of the men of the Old Guard? The  
joy of the brave and true;  
With joy they paced where Death gri-  
maced and his icy vapors blew,  
And with steady tread they bore their dead  
with the faith of the chosen few.

What of the men of the Old Guard? Ask  
of the arching skies,  
The grass that waves on their leafy graves  
is lisping their lullabies,  
And the lives they spent are their monu-  
ment and their title to Paradise.

---

## KID M'CANN

---

### KID McCANN.

WHERE the farthest foothills flatten to a  
circle-sweeping plain,  
And the cattle lands surrender to the on-  
ward march of grain,  
Where the prairies stretch unbroken to the  
corners of the sky,  
And the foremost wheat-fields rustle in the  
warm winds droning by—  
There a crippled cow-boy batches in the  
haunts of old-time herds,  
And the balance of the story is repeated in  
his words:

So you never heard how I lost my leg and  
hobble now on a crutch?  
So far as the story relates to me it can't  
concern you much,  
For it's really the story of Kid McCann  
and the price that a girl will pay  
For the fellow she sets her fancy on, as  
only a woman may;  
It isn't every girl who proves her faithful-  
ness in flames,  
But fellows who listen with moistened  
eyes speak softly of other names.



---

## KID M'CANN

---

Ned McCann owned the Double Star 'way  
back in the early days;  
He had come out here with a sickly wife  
and a kid he hoped to raise  
Where the climate suited the feeble-  
lunged, but life was scarce at its  
brim,  
Till a little mound by a prairie hill held  
half of the world for him;  
And his double love would have spoiled the  
child had she been like me or you,  
But her only thought was for her dad and  
the mother she scarcely knew.

'Course, she was bred to the ranges, and  
before she had reached her teens  
She could straddle a nag with the best of  
us and ride in her smock and jeans  
Till we all caved in, and she thought it  
fun to camp with a round-up bunch,  
And she shared her pillow and shared our  
sky and shared our pipe and lunch,  
And all of us mad in love with her, but  
she was only a kid,  
And she never dreamt what our feelings  
were, or the love-struck things we  
did.

---

## KID M'CANN

---

But even girls grow older, and, though  
always kind and sweet,  
There came a day when she realized that  
we were at her feet,  
But I had never spoken, nor anyone in the  
camp,  
When in came a foreign puncher, a thoroughbred black-leg scamp,  
And we who had known her since childhood saw, in our unbelieving eyes,  
This wily sinner setting himself to carry  
off the prize.

Of course it couldn't be stood for, and  
little as I might like,  
It fell to my lot to intimate to him it was  
time to hike,  
Which I did in straight-forward manner,  
in a way to be understood,  
And he looked at me with a sulky scowl  
that boded none of us good;  
But he did as he was ordered, to be absent  
before night,  
And we lost his form in the shadowy East  
as he cantered out of sight.

Next day, as I rode on my cayuse, apart  
from the rest of the gang,  
I felt a sudden rip in my leg like the jab  
of a red-hot tang;

---

## KID M'CANN

---

And my horse went down below me, with  
    my leg crushed in the clay,  
And over me leered that fiendish face, and  
    he grinned, and rode away;  
Rode away to the eastward,—I saw him  
    fade in the sky,  
And crushed and pinned from hip to heel  
    I counted the hours to die.

How long I lay I could never tell, for the  
    hours were days to me,  
Till struck with sudden terror I tore at  
    my wounded knee,  
For the east wind carried a smoky smell,  
    and I read in its fiery breath  
That half-a-mile of sun-dried grass was all  
    between me and death;  
With my hunting-knife I hacked my leg,  
    but I couldn't cut the bone,  
So I set myself as best I could to face my  
    fate alone.

The fire came on like a hungry fiend on  
    the wings of the rising wind,  
And I wouldn't care to tell you all the  
    things that were in my mind;  
I saw the sun through the swirling smoke,  
    and the blue sky far above,

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---

## KID M'CANN

---

And I bade good-bye to the things of earth  
and the dearer hopes of love;  
And I figured that I had closed accounts  
for life's uncertain span,  
When a smoke-blind broncho galloped up  
and there sat Kid McCann!

There wasn't much time for talking, with  
the death-roll in our ears,  
But we sometimes live in seconds more  
than we could in a thousand years,  
And before I could guess her meaning she  
had thrown herself on my face,  
And spread her leather jacket, which her  
warm hands held in place;  
I felt her breath in my nostrils and her  
finger-tips in my hair,  
And through the roar of the burning grass  
I fancied I heard a prayer.

'Twas but for a moment; the flames were  
gone; unharmed they had passed  
me by;  
God knows why the useless are spared to  
live while the faithful are called to  
die,  
But the form that had sheltered me  
shivered, and seemed to shrivel  
away,

---

KID M'CANN

---

And when I had raised it clear of my face  
    I looked into lifeless clay. . . .  
And darkness fell, and the world was  
    black, and the last of my reason  
    fled,  
And when I came to myself again I was  
    back at the ranch, in bed.

That was back in the Eighties, and still I  
    am living here;  
I built this shanty on the spot; her grave  
    is lying near;  
And when at nights my nostrils sense the  
    smoke-smell in the air  
I seem to feel her form again, and hear  
    again her prayer;  
And then the darkness settles down and  
    wild night-creatures cry,  
But stars come out in heaven and there's  
    comfort in the sky.

---

## WHO OWNS THE LAND?

---

### WHO OWNS THE LAND?

Who owns the land?

The Duke replied,  
“I own the land. My fathers died  
In winning it from foreign hands,  
They paid in red blood for their lands;  
Their swarthy *villeins* bit the dust  
In founding the Landowners’ Trust;  
And many generations dead  
Substantiate what I have said,  
The land belongs to us because  
We’ve had the making of the laws.”

Who owns the land?

The Common Man  
Said, “Government adopts a plan  
By which the land is held in fee  
For common folks, like you an’ me.  
The man who’d alter it’s a crank;  
I got the transfer—in the bank—  
I’ve little time to think about  
These theories silly fellows shout,  
I have to work to beat the band  
To pay the mortgage on the land.”

---

## WHO OWNS THE LAND?

---

Who owns the land?

The Statesman said,  
"The land supplies our daily bread,  
And raises wheat, and corn, and oats,  
And simple husbandmen—and votes—  
The land was won at awful cost  
And many soldiers' lives were lost.  
Too bad! They're mostly silly boys  
Who go to battle for the noise.  
Here's a quotation I admire:  
'The people's voice is God's desire,'  
And as I rule by right divine,  
I half suspect the land is mine."

Who owns the land?

The Farmer said,  
"What puts that question in yer head?  
I own it. Tuk a homestead here  
An' lived on it fer twenty year;  
I bet a new ten dollar bill  
That I could hold it down until  
I got the patent, an' I won;  
The land is mine, as sure's a gun.  
When city blokes come here to shoot,  
You bet, they get the icy boot!  
But 't made me mighty mad when that  
Danged railway come across the flat  
An' cut my homestead plumb in two,  
But there I wuz—what could I do?"

---

## WHO OWNS THE LAND?

---

But just set down, resigned to fate,  
Fer fear that they'd expropriate."

Who owns the land?

The Speculator  
Said, "Land is just an incubator  
In which to let your dollars hatch  
And, some fine morning—sell the batch."

Who owns the land?

The Indian Chief  
Said, "Ugh, the white man mucha thief!  
He steal my lan' because he's strong  
(By gar, it take him pretty long),  
He steal my lan', an' call it law,  
He turn me out, me an' my squaw;  
He let us die, because we not  
Like him, can live in one same spot;  
He talk so much of civilize—  
He's civil—sometimes—an' he lies!"

Who owns the land?

The Over-Rich  
Said, "All these people claim to, which  
Is satisfactory to me,  
So long as they cannot agree.  
Let them arrange it as they will  
As long as some one pays the bill.  
The present plan is, surely, fine;  
*The interest, at least, is mine."*



---

## WHO OWNS THE LAND?

---

Who owns the land?

In meek surprise  
The child said, "Like the air, and skies,  
And running water, flowers, and birds,  
And lullabies, and gentle words,  
And rosy sunsets, clouds, and storms,  
And God revealed in all His forms—  
'Tis plain the land's the right of birth  
Of every creature on the earth:  
*No man can make a grain of sand;  
How can he say he owns the land?"*

---

## A RACE FOR LIFE

---

### A RACE FOR LIFE.

*(As related for the benefit of the New  
Arrival.)*

YES, stranger, I hev trailed the West  
Since I wuz a kid on a bob-tailed nag,  
I hev known the old land at its best,  
An' packed most ev'ry kind of jag;  
I hev rode fer life frum a prairie fire,  
An' tramped fer life through a snow  
blockade;  
I hev crumpled "bad men" by the quire,  
But only once hev I been afraid.

I hev lain alone while the red-men crep'  
Aroun' me in their fightin'-paint;  
I hev soothed the widow while she wep'  
Because I'd made her man a saint;  
I hev lassoed lobsters frum the East,  
Till ev'ry j'int in their system shook,  
An' I'd never run frum man or beast  
Until I run frum a chinook.

---

## A RACE FOR LIFE

---

The chinook had his lair in Crow's Nest  
Pass,  
An' he foraged aroun' the Porcupine  
Hills,  
But he'd loafed so long that the ranchin'  
grass  
Had a wool-white cover frum the chills;  
An' me, like a chap that wuz not afraid  
Of anything with hide an' hair,  
Went out in a sleigh to the hills an'  
stayed  
Till the old chinook might find me  
there.

At last, when I thought I had tempted fate  
Enough fer a man with a past like mine,  
I hitched the bronks an' struck a gait  
Along the slopes of the Porcupine;  
An' the day wuz as cold as the Polar Sea,  
With a nip as keen as a she-wolf fang;  
But frost wuz just like food to me,  
An' boldly over the fields I sang:

*"I am the man frum the Hole in the  
Hills,  
Where the Great G. Whiliken capers  
'round;*

---

## A RACE FOR LIFE

---

*I am the gent that pays the bills  
When they plant a greenhorn in the  
ground;  
I am the Finish of folks that think  
They can run a bluff on the prairie-  
bred,  
Fer I give their vitals a fatal kink  
When I open up with a shower of  
lead."*

An' the cold bit into my nose an' chin,  
An' drilled itself to the marrow-bone;  
My face wuz drawn in a frozen grin,  
An' my fingers rattled like lumps of  
stone;  
But my heart wuz as brave as an outlaw  
stag,  
An' I laughed though the frost cut like  
a knife;  
Till sudden I felt the hind bob drag,  
An' I knew I wuz in fer a race fer life.

Out frum his lair the sly chinook  
Had hunted me with his fatal breath;  
I dared not turn aroun' to look,  
Fer to strand on the hillside there wuz  
death;

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## A RACE FOR LIFE

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The hot wind sizzled along my 'back,  
An' the sweat stood out on my shoulder-  
blade,  
So I yelled at the team through the frozen  
crack  
The roll of the tongue in my mouth had  
made—

“Get out o' here; by the Polar Star,  
The fiend of the South is on your  
heels!”  
An' I felt the old sleigh cringe an' jar,  
An' fer once I prayed—fer a pair o'  
wheels;  
But the sleigh stood still as the hind bob  
stuck  
In mud that rolled to the bolster-rail;  
So I slipped the tongue an' cursed my luck  
As I straddled a bronk an' hit the trail.

Well, we beat it out by half a neck,  
But the broncho's tail was scorched a  
sight,  
An' I wuz a blistered, parboiled wreck,  
An' nearly dead o' heat an' fright;  
An' I squatted down in a shady spot  
An' fanned myself with a wisp o' hay,  
An' the boys on the lower ranches thought  
They heard a voice in the chinook say:

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## A RACE FOR LIFE

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*"I am the dope that was made to feed,  
To fresh down-Easters just come out;  
They'll swallow it all in their green-  
horn greed,  
An' send it home, beyond a doubt;  
I am the caricature an' bluff  
That is part of the play of the West-  
ern men"—*

What's that? You say you've had  
enough?

Well, pass it on to your neighbor, then.







